

Tribal Access Center Project Technology Opportunity Program Grant Final Evaluation Report

The Tribal Access Center Project began in October 2002 and concluded in September 2005 as originally scheduled. It was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education under the Technology Opportunity Program (TOP). The Kalispel Tribe of Indians was the original recipient of the TOP grant and continued to manage the grant throughout the project's three years of operation.

This report summarizes the findings and conclusions of a comprehensive evaluation conducted by an independent evaluator during all three years of the project. This evaluation assessed both the implementation of the project and its outcomes. The findings and conclusions of the evaluation served as the basis for the quarterly reports, the annual reports, and the final report submitted to the Kalispel Tribe and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

BACKGROUND

Lead Agency

The Kalispel Tribe of Indians served as the lead organization for this project throughout its three years of operation. Within the Kalispel Tribe, the Camas Institute (a non-profit organization supported by the Kalispel Tribe) served as the lead agency in the project during its first year of operation. However, there were significant problems with the leadership and management provided by the Camas Institute during this time. After a change in leadership at the Camas Institute at the end of the project's first year of operation, its role in the project was diminished although the agency remained involved in the project through its conclusion.

The Culture Office of the Kalispel Tribe was involved in the original development of this project and worked with the Camas Institute to implement the project during its first year of operation. After the role of the Camas Institute was reduced, the Kalispel Culture Office became the lead agency within the Kalispel Tribe for this project. This role continued through the end of the project.

Partners

The project ultimately identified the institutions which agreed to host a Tribal Access Center as partners in the project. In addition to the Kalispel Tribe, this included three schools or school systems (the Cusick Public School System, the Wellpinit Public School System, and the Nkwusm Language Immersion School), agencies representing three other area tribes (the Spokane Tribal Language Department, the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee, and the Okanogan Language Program), and a museum (the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture [MAC]). Originally, the Spokane Public School System was listed as a partner in this project. However, it never became an active participant.

The partnership among the institutions hosting the Tribal Access Centers was generally successful – although at times it was rocky. The Kalispel Culture Office and the MAC were committed partners throughout the course of the project. The Spokane Language Department, the Cusick Public School System, and the Wellpinit Public School System became active partners at the end of the first year. The Salish-Pend d’Oreille Culture Committee, the Okanogan Language Program, and the Nkwusm Language Immersion School became active partners at the end of the second year or during the third year.

During the first year, the partnership was smaller because only three sites were operational. During that year, regular (generally monthly) meetings were held. These meetings were used both for planning and to share information among the partners. As additional sites were identified, the partnership grew substantially. Frequent face-to-face meetings became more difficult to arrange because of the distances that partner representatives would be required to travel. However, the project continued to hold well-attended periodic face-to-face meetings. Such meetings were conducted at least once each quarter – and more frequently when specific issues arose.

By the second year, the face-to-face meetings played a secondary role in maintaining the integrity of this partnership. Instead, it was the Project Director who served as the “glue” who held the project partnership together. Because he had long-standing personal relationships with all the other partners – both among the tribal/organizational leaders and staff – he maintained regular communication. Moreover, his professional responsibilities and his personal role within the tribal communities provided regular opportunities for face-to-face meetings with representatives of the other partners. Over time, project staff and consultants supported the efforts of the Project Director through their own periodic communication with the partners. In addition, the Tribal Access Network emerged as an online tool to share information. Nevertheless, the Project Director remained the key support person for the partnership.

The Inland Northwest Technology Education Center (INTEC), a non-profit organization based in Spokane, was originally recruited as a partner in the project to provide technical assistance and access to high-quality staff training facilities. However, leadership changes led to its withdrawal from the project at the beginning. It was replaced by Spokane Intercollegiate Research & Technology Institute (SIRTI), a public-private organization also based in Spokane. SIRTI remained involved in the project – in the same support role as INTEC – through the end.

Staffing

The key personnel for this project remained relatively stable after its first year of operation. During the project’s second and third year of operation, the key project personnel included:

- Director of the Kalispel Culture Office (Francis Cullooyah) who also served as the project director
- Assistant Director of the Kalispel Culture Office (Stanley Bluff Jr.) who assisted in project implementation and operation

- Business Manager of the Camas Institute (Kim Peone) who assisted in the financial management of the project
- Controller for the Kalispel Tribe (Lorraine Wood) who assisted in the financial management of the project
- Coordinator of the Tribal Access Centers (Jake Sattleen), a position created for the purposes of the project

There were significant changes in key project staff toward the end of the project's first year of operation. The Director of the Camas Institute (John Guenther) left his position at the end of the project's first year and this position was no longer considered key staff in this project. The Business Manager of the Camas Institute (John Beck) was replaced by Kim Peone. The initial Coordinator of the Tribal Access Centers (Linda Markwell) was replaced by Jake Sattleen). The other three positions (Director and Assistant Director of the Kalispel Culture Office and Controller for the Kalispel Tribe) continued to serve as key personnel in the project. Overall, these changes contributed to an improvement in project management and operations.

IMPLEMENTATION

Project Sites

The project succeeded in establishing all nine proposed Tribal Access Center sites. Three sites (Kalispel Culture Office; Camas Institute Learning Center; and Plateau Center of the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture) were successfully established during the first year. Three additional sites (Cusick Junior-Senior High School; Spokane Tribal Language Department; and Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee) were successfully established during the second year. The last three sites (Wellpinit High School; Nkwusm Language Immersion School; and the Okanogan Language Program) were successfully established during the third year, although their establishment was somewhat delayed.

Kalispel Culture Office – This site originally became operational during the second quarter of the project's first year of operation and remained operational without interruption through the end of the project. This site was used for (1) the development of online language curriculum and instructional materials for use with the Salish language courses for Kalispel Tribe members (adults and children) and (2) digitization of images of tribal members and cultural events. The site was used to incorporate these materials into the Tribal Access Network.

Camas Institute Learning Center – This site originally became operational during the second quarter of the project's first year of operation. It remained operational through the end of the project except for a three-week period during the second quarter of the project's third year of operation. During that time, the site added four computers and new software and modified the network. This site was used by project staff for (1) basic computer training classes involving Kalispel Tribe members and (2) one-on-one projects conducted after-school with Cusick High School students.

Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture – This site originally became operational during the second quarter of the project's first year of operation and remained operational without interruption through the end of the project. This site was used by project staff to (1) archive and present descriptive information about exhibits conducted by the MAC that related to the Plateau tribes and (2) digitize and describe photographs from the MAC collection. The site was used to incorporate this information in the Tribal Access Network.

Cusick Junior-Senior High School – This site originally became operational during the second quarter of the project's second year of operation. However, project-related activities did not begin at this site until the fourth quarter (coinciding with the beginning of the 2004-05 school year). At this point, the site discovered that technical issues created some limitations in accessing applications, but not the Tribal Access Network and its content information. Ultimately, these issues did not prevent project staff from carrying out planned activities with Cusick High School students. The site also was not operational for two weeks during the second quarter of the project's third year of operation. During this time, technical issues related to the integration of the existing network and new equipment were resolved. Because this occurred during spring break, it did not disrupt project-related activities. This site was used by project and school staff to integrate the use of the Tribal Access Network and its resources as part of two high school classes (one for seniors and one for freshmen) during the 2004-05. These classes were also planned for the 2005-06 school year.

Spokane Tribal Language Department – This site originally became operational during the second quarter of the project's second year of operation and remained operational without interruption through the end of the project. This site was used by tribal staff to incorporate information into the Tribal Access Network. This included descriptive information about the Spokane Tribal Language Department and its efforts in preserving the Salish language. In particular, the Salish Pictorial Dictionary and related language lessons (developed by that Department) were incorporated into the Tribal Access Network. This will allow the Tribal Access Network to be used as an online tool to support members of the Spoken Tribe (both adults and children) in learning the Salish language.

Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee – This site originally became operational during the second quarter of the project's second year of operation. However, the site became inactive during the fourth quarter of the same year due to a conflict between the existing network and the new equipment installed under the project. A lack of effective communication and cooperation between the informational technology staff of the Flathead Reservation and the project consultant contracted to install and maintain the TAC equipment prevented the resolution of this problem until the project director intervened during the fourth quarter of the third year. During this limited period of time, the site was used by project and tribal staff to incorporate descriptive information about the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee (including its resources and activities) into the Tribal Access Network. However, tribal staff planned to use this site after the project ended to digitize and archive images, video, and documents held by the Culture Committee – following the models developed at the Kalispel Culture Office and MAC sites.

Wellpinit High School – Due to delays in completing the cooperative agreement with the Wellpinit School System, this site did not become operational until the third quarter of the project's third year of operation. However, project-related activities did not begin until the fourth

quarter (coinciding with the beginning of the 2005-06 school year). At that time, the site was used for technology-based instructional activities offered to students in Wellpinit High School and through the Alliance Program (an alternative high school program targeting at-risk students).

Nkwusm Language Immersion School – This site did not become fully operational until the fourth quarter of the project's third year of operation. This was due both to substantial delays in completing the cooperative agreement and problems in communication between staff from the school and the project consultant responsible for installing and maintaining TAC equipment. The communication issues were ultimately resolved due to the intervention of the project director. Although the site was not fully operational, it was partly operational during the third quarter. As a result, the site was used to incorporate some student instructional support materials into the Tribal Access Network. In addition, project and school staff began develop plans for using this site to incorporate descriptive information about the school and its instructional materials. This will allow the Tribal Access Network to be used to disseminate information about the language immersion school among tribal members within the region and to support instructional activities for students carried out at the school.

Okanogan Language Program – This site did not become operational until the fourth quarter of the project's third year of operation. This was due both to a delay in complete the cooperative agreement and communication problems between tribal staff and the project consultant responsible for installing and maintaining TAC equipment. The communication issues were ultimately resolved due to the intervention of the project director. During the limited time available prior to the end of the project, tribal and project staff worked together to develop specific plans for using this site to incorporate information into the Tribal Access Network. This will allow information related to tribal language and tribal culture collected by the Okanogan Language Program and will allow the Tribal Access Network to be used to support the ongoing language and cultural preservation activities carried out by the Okanogan Language Program.

Project Activities

To ensure the effective and timely implementation of its activities, the project initially identified a series of benchmarks. The benchmarks were modified twice: first to incorporate the development of the Tribal Access Network as the dynamic, web-based environment used for preservation, documentation, and storage of information on tribal culture, history, and language and second to emphasize the use of context-based training for on-site staff and end-users.

Over its entire three-year period of operation, all of the project's identified benchmarks were achieved. In addition, the project achieved three-quarters of its benchmarks within one month of the original proposed completion date. However during its third year of operation, the project only achieved half of its benchmarks on time or within one month. This was primarily a result of delays in the installation of the equipment at the new Tribal Access Centers established during that year. Most of these delays were caused by communication difficulties between the consulting organization responsible for installing and maintaining the equipment and the organizations housing the new Tribal Access Centers. These difficulties were finally resolved when the project director intervened.

The following table lists the final project benchmarks with their proposed and actual completion dates. Benchmarks related to five categories of activities: Establishment of the Tribal Access Centers (TAC); Training of project and site staff (Training); Establishment of the web-based environment (Internet); Development and implementation of programs for end-users (Programs); and Dissemination of information to other interested organizations (Public Info).

Type of Activity	Benchmarks	Proposed Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
TAC	Identify site for Year 1 TAC's	11/2002	11/2002
TAC	Complete inventory of existing equipment & materials available at Year 1 TAC's	12/2002	12/2002
TAC	Complete purchase of new equipment & materials for Year 1 TAC's.	12/2002	1/2003
Programs	Complete development of collaborative program for using Star Nations website to document & archive history, culture, and language of Plateau tribes.	2/2003	2/2003
TAC	Complete placement of equipment & confirm appropriate Internet access for Year 1 TAC's	2/2003	3/2003
TAC	Formal opening of Year 1 TAC's	2/2003	3/2003
Programs	Complete development of initial training workshops for project participants.	3/2003	3/2003
Training	Complete design of training workshops for on-site support staff in TAC's.	5/2003	5/2003
Training	Complete pilot implementation of training program for project participants.	7/2003	7/2003
Internet	Create Tribal Access Network (TAN) to integrate web-based resources available to project participants.	8/2003	8/2003
TAC	Identify sites for Year 2 TAC's.	9/2003	9/2003
Training	Complete revision of training workshops for project participants	9/2003	9/2003
Training	Complete training workshops for on-site support staff in Year 1 TAC's.	9/2003	9/2003
Programs	Complete pilot of collaborative program for using Star Nations website to document & archive history, culture & language with Kalispel tribe.	7/2003	10/2003
Public Info	Begin ongoing dissemination of information on use of Star Nations website to document & archive history, culture & language of Plateau tribes.	1/2004	10/2003
Programs	Complete revision of collaborative program for using Star Nations website to document & archive history, culture & language of Plateau tribes.	12/2003	12/2003
Internet	Begin use of TAC's to incorporate information on tribal history & culture into the TAN.	1/2004	1/2004

Type of Activity	Benchmarks	Proposed Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
Programs	Begin development of web-based interactive modules to document Salish language & incorporate modules into TAN.	1/2004	1/2004
TAC	Complete inventory of existing equipment & materials available at Year 2 TAC's	11/2003	2/2004
TAC	Complete cooperative agreements for Year 2 TAC's.	11/2003	2/2004
TAC	Complete purchase of new equipment & materials for Year 2 TAC's.	12/2003	2/2004
Training	Begin implementation of ongoing training program for on-sit support staff & other organizational staff.	2/2004	2/2004
TAC	Complete placement of equipment & confirm appropriate Internet access for Year 2 TAC's.	2/2004	3/2004
TAC	Formal opening of Year 2 TAC's.	2/2004	3/2004
Training	Begin training of teachers on use of resources of TAC's.	3/2004	3/2004
Public Info	Begin dissemination of information on TAN to other tribes through conferences.	5/2004	5/2004
TAC	Complete Year 2 site review of all operating TAC's.	6/2004	6/2004
Training	Begin training of teachers on use of TAN & its integration into regular classroom lessons.	5/2004	8/2004
Programs	Pilot course for secondary school students on use of technology for documenting community/tribal history & culture.	4/2004	9/2004
TAC	Identify sites for Year 3 TAC's	9/2004	10/2004
Programs	Begin high school course on use of technology & TAN to document personal & community history.	10/2004	10/2004
Programs	Begin courses for tribal members (adults & youth) on use of technology available in centers & tools/resources of TAN.	1/2005	1/2005
Programs	Expand use of course for secondary school students on use of technology for documenting community/tribal history & culture.	1/2005	1/2005
Training	Continue implementation of ongoing training program for on-site support staff & organizational staff.	10/2004	2/2005
Internet	Use TAN to provide participating Plateau tribes & tribal members access to online materials for teaching Salish language.	3/2005	4/2005
Programs	Begin use of online teaching materials in TAN to teacher Salish in courses offered by Kalispel Cultural Office.	3/2005	4/2005
TAC	Complete cooperative agreements for Year 3 TAC's	10/2004	5/2005

Type of Activity	Benchmarks	Proposed Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
TAC	Complete inventory of existing equipment & materials available in Year 3 TAC's.	11/2004	6/2005
TAC	Complete purchase of new equipment & materials for Year 3 TAC's.	12/2004	8/2005
Programs	Offer summer program on use of technology for documenting community/tribal history & culture.	7/2004	8/2005
TAC	Complete placement of equipment & confirm appropriate Internet access for Year 3 TAC's.	2/2005	9/2005
TAC	Formal opening of Year 3 TAC's.	2/2005	9/2005

Problems & Their Resolution

As with any complex, collaborative project emphasizing innovation and seeking substantial change, significant problems and challenges emerged throughout its three years of operation. These challenges related to all aspects of the project, including the creation of the Tribal Access Centers, training of project staff, interactions among project partners, development and implementation of programming for end-users, and overall project management.

A review of these challenges and the responses by the project revealed that these challenges were consistently and effectively addressed. Most challenges were addressed in a relatively short timeframe – ensuring a minimal impact on the project's implementation and outcomes. The following lists significant short-term problems and strategies used to resolve these problems:

- **Withdrawal of INTEC** – Due to internal organizational changes, INTEC (one of the original project partners) concluded that it was unable to provide the level of assistance originally committed. However, the project (with assistance from INTEC) successfully recruited a new partner (SIRTI) to provide the same level, nature, and quality of assistance originally offered by INTEC.
- **External Delay in Completing Star Nations Project** – The Star Nations website was originally intended to serve as an important foundation upon which the activities of this project were to build. However, technical and development issues meant that the completion of the Star Nations website took much longer than originally anticipated. As a result, this project developed alternative web-based platform (Tribal Access Network) that could provide a dynamic, interactive environment for documenting tribal culture, history, and language and developing technology knowledge and skills in tribal members and others. When completed, the Star Nations website was linked to the Tribal Access Network.
- **Delays in Purchasing Equipment** – During the project's first year of operation, the process of ordering and receiving computer equipment and software for the sites took longer than originally anticipated. Subsequently, staff in the Kalispel Culture Office, the Camas Institute, and the Kalispel Tribe's finance office worked together to ensure clear and mutual

understanding of all required ordering procedures. As a result, this problem did not reoccur during subsequent years.

- **Training Needs of Site Staff** – At the end of the project's first year of operation, the independent evaluation observed a need for additional and ongoing training for site staff in the use of the TAN and its applications and in the implementation of programming for potential end-users. The project conducted a series of all-day training workshops and periodic partner meetings. In addition, it provided one-on-one on-site assistance to site staff. The assistance provided by the project training consultant proved to be particularly effective in both training and engaging site staff in the use of the TAN and the implementation of programming for end-users.
- **Problems with Computer Network at the Cusick Junior/Senior High School** – The infrastructure and computer equipment at the Cusick Junior/Senior High School was aged. This substantially limited the capacity of the Tribal Access Center at this site. The project replaced some of the computers, provided software, and upgraded the network infrastructure. Class101 (the project consultant responsible for installing and maintaining the equipment in the TAC's) contributed equipment, expertise, and time to work with school staff in resolving this issue.
- **Problems with New Server at Cusick Junior/Senior High School** – Initially, there was an understanding by project staff and the training consultant that the new server installed at Cusick School site would allow remote access to a range of applications by all computers in the school and by students working at home. Although the server technically did have this capacity, ultimately it was determined that the local area network and the home connections to the Internet lacked the bandwidth to make this practical. As a result, the project training consultant and school staff adjusted schedules and the design of the high school course to accommodate this limitation. Courses were successfully conducted with both high school freshmen and high school seniors.
- **Skill Requirements of End-Users** – Project staff and consultants determined that the technology knowledge, experiences, and skills of many students in the Cusick School, of community members, and of tribal members was very limited. Project training consultant adjusted course design to successfully address these needs. This required a greater focus on activities involving the use of basic computer applications (i.e. writing, digitizing pictures, creating or editing images, preparing web pages). The project developed context-based learning activities for end-users (students) focused on these basic skill needs.

During the course of the project, it faced two significant challenges – one related to management and the other to technology – that were very time-consuming to effectively resolve. This delayed the project in achieving several important benchmarks. Nevertheless, project leadership recognized that the long-term benefits of fully resolving these issues justified the initial delays and would contribute to the project's long-term sustainability.

- **Delays in Completing Cooperative Agreements** – The political and cultural leaders of the Plateau Tribes interested in or involved with this project had limited prior experience in the development of cooperative agreements to govern their joint participation in collaborative

projects. In addition, the issues being discussed (tribal culture, history, and language) were sensitive ones that required considerable discussion among many stakeholders (tribal council, elders & tribal staff responsible for cultural office and education programs). The negotiations involved in the development of these cooperative agreements were consistently more complex, difficult, and time-consuming than originally anticipated. In fact, the project was not able to develop an acceptable cooperative agreement with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe to allow its participation. Nevertheless, the project's leadership recognized the long-term importance of developing mutually acceptable cooperative agreements. As a result, it invested the time necessary – and adjusted implementation plans accordingly. Nevertheless, the time required to obtain acceptable cooperative agreements contributed to a substantial delay in the creation of the Tribal Access Centers during the project's third year of operation.

- **Connectivity for the Kalispel Tribe** – Plans to provide broadband Internet access to Kalispel Tribal offices were not completed prior to the beginning of this project. Discussions with the regional utilities were more time-consuming than originally anticipated but successfully culminated at the end of the project's first year of operation. Moreover, they led to successful efforts by the tribe to obtain state government funding for creating a Wide Area Network encompassing all Kalispel tribal offices and the homes of all tribal members. This meant tribal members would replace their existing dial-up connections with broadband connections. This would substantially increase the scope and impact of the TOP-funded project.

During the project's first year of operation, it faced some **significant management challenges**. The initial project management structure had the Kalispel Culture Office and the Camas Institute jointly responsible for directing and managing the operation of the project. Unfortunately, several problems arose with this arrangement. The leadership of the Camas Institute at that time lacked both the skills and commitment to work collaboratively with the Kalispel Culture Office – and other project partners. In addition, the Director and Business Manager of the Camas Institute lacked the knowledge, skills, and experience to fulfill their responsibilities regarding effective grants management.

These challenges were successfully addressed both in the short-term and in the long-term with minimal impact on the project's implementation. In the short-term, staff from the Kalispel Culture Office worked with project consultants and partners to overcome the problems created by these two issues and limit their impact on project activities. They generally succeeded and the project was generally successful in achieving its benchmarks during that year. In the long-term, the focus for project direction and management shifted primarily to the Kalispel Culture Office. In addition, the Director and Business Manager of the Camas Institute were replaced by more skilled and experienced individuals with a greater understanding and commitment to effective collaboration.

The project also faced **significant staffing challenges** during all three years of its operations. The person initially hired to serve as the Coordinator for Tribal Access Centers proved to lack the knowledge, skills, or experience to develop innovative learning strategies which would appeal to both students and adults. She used typical classroom lecture and presentation approaches rather than context-based learning strategies. Her approaches failed to engage tribal children, youth, and adults. In addition, she struggled in working cooperatively with other project

staff and consultants, as well as with other tribal staff. Her successor in this position had much stronger technology skills and a much better understanding of the use of the Internet for training purposes. However, he also lacked or understanding in the development and use of innovative learning strategies, including context-based learning, for technology training.

The Project Director addressed these staffing challenge by directly involving the project training consultant in developing and implementing context-based learning with site staff and potential end-users. Midway through the project's third year of operation, he substantially expanded her role in this area. This significantly accelerated the development of such programming. However, the staffing problems did substantially delay development and implementation of some context-based learning programs for site staff and end-users. Nevertheless, the early involvement of the project training consultant in this effort ensured that this approach was used and demonstrated its value from the beginning.

The project faced ongoing and substantial problems with **communication among project staff, project consultants, and project partners** throughout its three years of operation. These problems emerged in multiple contexts. For example, communication problems among different offices on the Spokane Reservation, Colville Reservation, and Flathead Reservation contributed to delays in establishing the Tribal Access Centers for the Spokane Tribal Language Department, the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee, and the Okanogan Language Program. Similarly, miscommunication and lack of communication by Class101 (the project consultant responsible for installing and maintaining the Tribal Access Center equipment) with several of the project partners (including the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee, the Okanogan Language Program, and the Nkwusm Language Immersion School) either delayed the establishment of the Tribal Access Centers on those sites or substantially disrupted their operations. A lack of communication between the Coordinator of the TAC's, Class101, and the project training consultant also led to some disruption in programming at the Cusick Junior-Senior High School.

From the beginning, the project took steps to address the communication problems. It established regular partner meetings to identify and address problems. It also used the Tribal Access Network as an important avenue of communication among project staff, consultants, and partners. These efforts did increase communication and contributed to greater shared knowledge about the program among the participating organizations. Nevertheless, communication problems increased over time. In part, this was because the project became increasingly complex (adding three sites and three partner organizations each year). Ultimately addressing the communication problems generally required the outside intervention and mediation of the project director. Throughout the course of the project, he consistently and effectively carried out this role. His efforts ensured that all nine project sites along with the Tribal Access Network were operational when the project ended and beyond.

OUTCOMES

Achievement of Project Goals

Goal #1 – The project was **successful** in increasing documentation of the culture, history, and language of Kalispel Tribe and neighboring tribes in the region.

The Kalispel Tribe (through its Culture Department) used the resources and tools developed by this project to (1) digitize and document old photographs of Kalispel tribal members, (2) create and document digital photographs and videos of contemporary cultural events and activities, and (3) develop an online language curriculum and supporting instructional materials for use with a Salish language course for Kalispel tribal adults and children.

The Spokane Tribe (through its Tribal Language Office) used the resources and tools developed by this project to transform the Salish Pictorial Dictionary and related language lessons (developed by that Office) into widely-accessible online tools to support Spokane Tribal members in learning the Salish language.

The Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee (located on the Flathead Reservation) and the Okanogan Language Program (located on the Colville Reservation) both joined the project toward the end of its third year of operation. During the course of the project, both offices began to resources and tools developed by this project to begin to digitize, document, and store materials (including photographs) and other tribal information previously collected by each office.

The Plateau Center at the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture in Spokane used the resources and tools developed by this project to (1) digitize and documents old photographs related to the Plateau tribes held in its collection, (2) photograph and document objects related to the Plateau tribes held in its collection, and (3) create images and descriptive information on exhibits conducted by the Museum that related to the Plateau tribes.

Participation in this project also demonstrated to the leadership of all four tribes the importance of digital documentation of their culture, history, and language and the value of the project's technology-based resources and tools to successfully create such digital documentation. As a direct result of the project, the appropriate offices in all four tribes to continuing or substantially expanding these efforts at the conclusion of this project.

Participation in this project also motivated the leadership of the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture to substantially expand efforts to create and maintain digital archives of its collections of Native American photographs and objects and its exhibits related to the Plateau Tribe. As a direct result of this project, the NWMAC successfully solicited additional external funding to support this effort at the conclusion of this project.

Goal #2 – The project was **successful** in creating a regional technological infrastructure accessible to tribal members to exchange information, ideas & perspectives about their shared past & future.

The project successfully established the nine Tribal Access Centers as originally proposed. Each Center provided tribal members effective access to appropriate equipment, software, Internet, and technical assistance. The Centers were established in an urban location (Spokane) and in rural sites on the four reservations (Kalispel, Spokane, Colville, and Flathead). These Centers operated in tribal offices on all four reservations, in three public schools, and in a museum. The Centers were located in geographically dispersed sites across eastern Washington and western

Montana. Commitments have been provided by participating partners to ensure that 8 of the 9 Centers remain fully operational at the conclusion of the project.

The project also successfully established the Tribal Access Network. This was a dynamic, web-based environment which could be used by tribal members for preservation, documentation, and storage of information on tribal culture, history, and language. Text, images, video, and sound files could all be created, organized, and stored on the Tribal Access Network. The design of the Tribal Access Network also offered multiple options for securing or sharing this information. Through password-protection and other controls available to individual tribal members, the information they stored on the Tribal Access Network could be kept absolutely confidential, shared with a small number of individuals, shared only with tribal agency staff, shared with other tribal members, or made available to any interested member of the public. Commitments have been provided by the Kalispel Tribe to maintain the Tribal Access Network at the conclusion of the project.

Goal #3 – The project was **successful** in building knowledge and habits of mind to allow tribal members to regularly & effectively use the regional technological infrastructure.

The project successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of its context-based training approach to increase the technology-related knowledge and skills of tribal members and others. This approach was implemented in several different contexts with consistent success.

The project's technology training consultant worked individually with staff from the participating tribal agencies (including the Kalispel Culture Office, the Spokane Tribal Language Office, the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee, and the Okanogan Language Program) and staff from the Plateau Center of the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture to use the technology resources of the Tribal Access Centers and the Tribal Access Network to carry out activities designed to create and archive information and material related to tribal culture, history, and language. This included text documents, still images, video images, and sound files. By the end of the project, these staff demonstrated and reported greater confidence and comfort in the general use of computers and the Internet. They demonstrated and reported greater skill in using this technology to create and organize text information, to create and manipulate images, video, and sound files, and to communicate with colleagues online. They also reported using the technology more frequently for these purposes to accomplish work-related tasks. A few staff demonstrated more sophisticated understanding of image editing and website creation due to the activities they conducted in this project.

A similar pattern emerged in the classes conducted by the technology training consultant with teachers and students at Wellpinit High School. By using the technology to create projects that were relevant to their personal history or the history of their community, participating students (and the high school teachers working with them) developed greater confidence, knowledge, and skill in general computer use and use of the Internet, as well as the use of specific applications related to word processing, image manipulation, presentations, and website design. Again, some students demonstrated more sophisticated capabilities in these areas.

During the course of the project, tribal agency and museum staff also worked with tribal members (including tribal elders) in the use of technology – either to generate and archive

information on tribal culture and history or to learn the Salish language. These activities were conducted during informal one-on-one settings and as part of formal classes with groups of participants. Tribal members (including tribal elders) who participated in these activities demonstrated greater confidence and capability in technology use (including word processing, email communication, and website access).

Goal # 4 – The project was **successful** in assisting tribal members and members of the public in regularly using web-based learning environment on tribal history, culture and language in formal and informal learning settings.

Staff from the four participating tribal agencies and the museum reported regularly using the project's web-based learning environment (Tribal Access Network) to create, organize, archive, and share information and materials related to tribal history, culture, and language. They also reported periodically working with individual tribal members (including tribal elders) in these efforts.

The Tribal Access Network was also used in several more formal learning settings. It was used to support Salish language courses conducted by the Kalispel Culture Office with adults and youth. The Tribal Access Network provided participants online access to instructional support materials directly related to specific course lessons. The Tribal Access Network was also incorporated into two courses (one for seniors and one for freshmen) conducted at Cusick High School. The Tribal Access Network was used directly by students to create and display course projects. Finally, teachers from the Nkwusm Language Immersion School used the Tribal Access Network to provide their elementary school students access to supplemental learning materials (including Salish language word lists). In each setting, students regularly accessed the Tribal Access Network as part of their coursework.

Project Impact

Each tribe's shared culture, history, and language is crucial in maintaining its unique nature and sense of community. **The project substantially accelerated the efforts of the four participating tribal agencies and the museum to document and preserve their tribal culture, history, and language.** It accomplished this by demonstrating the significant contributions that could be made to this effort through the substantial and regular use of computer technology and the Internet. It also provided each of the tribal agencies with specific approaches that could be used to effectively integrate the use of technology into these tasks and built the capacity of agency staff to do so.

In addition, the project provided each tribal community greater practical access to information about their shared history and culture. For example, digitizing old photographs brought out details in the images that were no longer apparent in the hard copy. Storing these digitized images on the Tribal Access Network made them accessible to many more people through the Internet. Given the distances between the reservations and between the reservations and the museum in Spokane, this meant that some tribal members would have a realistic chance to see and study these images for the first time. Seeing these photos served to catalyze old memories that were nearly forgotten – and allowed these memories to be preserved and shared with the larger tribal community. Hearing or reading different recollections about the same

image or set of images provided a younger member of the tribe with a greater understanding of the story told by a photo.

The participating tribal agencies and the museum are committed to continuing the activities begun during this project. This means that the impact and value of the project to these tribal communities will continue to amplify over time.

Through their participation in the project, staff in the participating tribal agencies and the museum substantially increased the nature and frequency in use of computer technology and the Internet in support of their job. Staff made greater use of technology to carry out activities associated with the preservation and documentation of information on tribal culture, history, and language. However, staff also made use of this technology to manage their work and to maintain communication with colleagues.

Several examples of these changes emerged during the course of the project. Staff from the Kalispel Culture Office began to routinely photograph the tribe's cultural events and then to sharing these photographs with others by storing and displaying them on the Tribal Access Network. Another staff member from the same office incorporated supplemental learning materials for his Salish language instruction course into the Tribal Access Network and then used these materials in teaching the classes. This allowed students to take a very different approach to the course – combining group learning activities in the classroom with additional self-directed learning or review in the home (or community site). A staff member from the museum reported meeting with a tribal elder during her trip to the museum. He showed her some photos that had been digitized and incorporated into the Tribal Access Network to allow web-based access. He also showed her how to access these images on her own through the Internet. It turned out that some of the photos display one of her relatives. After she returned home, she was able spend more time study the photos online. Subsequently, she used email to communicate some of her recollections and observations to the museum staff person – recollections and observations that would not have occurred in the absence of this project.

Finally, the **project substantially increased the commitment and capacity of participating Plateau tribes and tribal agencies to collaborate around common goals associated with preservation of tribal culture, history, and language.** Prior to this project, the participating Plateau tribes did interact in a variety of social and governmental contexts. However, they had little experience in developing and carrying out a project with shared goals and formal collaboration.

This project demonstrated to key tribal leaders the value of collaborative projects. It also provide models and strategies for creating and sustaining such formal collaborations. As a result, all four participating tribes have committed to sustaining the formal collaborations developed through this project to advance common goals around the documentation and preservation of tribal culture, history, and language. In addition, the Kalispel Culture Office has proposed additional collaborative projects around arts education and Salish language preservation with other tribes. The proposed projects also incorporate many of the collaboration strategies employed by this project.

CONCLUSIONS

Recommendations on Project Continuation

The independent evaluator strongly concurs with the decision of the Kalispel Culture Office and the other participating tribal agencies to sustain the infrastructure created through this project and expand upon the activities begun under this project. These tribal agencies should collaborate to ensure that the Tribal Access Centers developed under this project remain fully operational and accessible to tribal members. In addition, these agencies should collaborate to maintain the Tribal Access Network developed under this project. These agencies should consult with the Informational Technology staff for their respective tribes to ensure cost-effective, long-term maintenance of the TAN. If necessary, these agencies should consider the use of an alternative web-based platform with a greater range of functions to replace the current platform.

The Kalispel Culture Office should also work with the other participating tribal agencies to develop and implement three proposed projects that are spin-offs of the TOP-funded project. This includes:

- Project concept designed to continue and expand efforts begun in the TOP project for the documentation and preservation of tribal culture, history, and traditions by incorporating a more formalized oral history component into the project while expanding the number of tribal members actively involved in the documentation and preservation process.
- Project to expose children and youth (particularly tribal members) to the tribe's traditional art forms and products by involving schools, after-school programs, and other non-profit organizations.
- Project to preserve and revitalize the Salish language (particularly the form traditionally spoken by its members) by supporting greater documentation of the spoken and written language, as well as the development and implementation of Salish language courses for adults, youth, and children in the tribe.

Lessons Learned

Collaboration – Strong collaborations are a valuable asset for creating and sustaining successful projects. However, sufficient time must be invested to lay the foundation for strong collaborations and to maintain those collaborations once created. Frequent face-to-face meetings are not necessary to maintain such collaborations, but regular substantive communication is. Personal relationships often play a key role in establishing and maintaining such collaborations.

Communication – Communication emerged as a significant barrier which affected project implementation and operation. The project consultant responsible for the installation and maintenance of the Tribal Access Center equipment had communication problems with the agencies hosting several of the Centers during the second and third years of the project. The misunderstandings that resulted from these communication problems led to delays in the installation of equipment at these sites or to the equipment becoming inoperable for periods of

time. Ultimately, it was important in resolving communication issues that the Project Director directly intervened.

Context-Based Training – The context-based training approach used by this project played a key role in effectively engaging organizational staff and end-users. More traditional technical training approaches were ineffective in this regard. To be effective, a project must recruit staff that understand and share a vision around the value and use of context-based technology training. A project must also aggressively develop and demonstrate a wide range of programs that offer “real world” benefits to various categories of end-users for the context-based training approach to be successful.